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ABSTRACT

The idea of "Executive Mind" carries with it the notion of purposeful and effective action. Part I of this paper characterizes three complements to "Executive Mind"--"Observing Mind," "Theorizing Mind," and "Passionate Mind"--and offers historical figures exemplifying all four types. The concluding section of part I, "The Transforming Power of Executive Mind," uses excerpts from an interview with Lech Walesa to illustrate all four types in a sirgle individual. Part II begins by examining Japanese director Kurosawa's recent film, "Kagemusha" (The Shadow Warrior) as a felicitous illustration of "Executive Mind" and of the dilemmas of entering the executive role and of executive succession. Part II concludes by discussing the cultivation of a genuine executive team. The paper's third and final part explores a central feature of "Executive Mind"--"timely action." After proposing that research join existential study, developmental theorizing, and empirical testing, variations on the experience cf time are discussed, a six-dimensional space/time model is offered, a theory of timely action and a nine-stage theory of organizational development are elaborated, and the usefulness of two distinct kinds of inquiry--interactional and instrumented--and the incompatibility of "Executive Mind" with ideological rigidity are affirmed. (JBM)

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Executive Mind, Timely Action

William R. Torbert

PART I

Characteristics of Executive Mind

The Americans are, to use their favorite expression, a highly executive people.
Bryce
The American Commonwealth, 1888

Executive Mind, Timely Action is a three-part analysis of the nature of executive leadership. The author examines the disciplines that make and sustain great executives, citing from the lives of such diverse leaders as Winston Churchill, Lech Walesa of the Polish Solidarity Movement, and Red Auerback of the Boston Celtics. He investigates the profoundly difficult process of executive decision-making, then proposes theoretical models to describe how great leaders use timeliness, self-evaluation, and the critical support of their colleagues to come to the right decision at the right time.

From the forthcoming book by Suresh Srivastva and Associates, *Functioning of the Executive Mind* Jossey-Bass, 1983. Reprinted by permission of the author and publisher.

The word "executive" descends from the Latin *ex*—"out" and *sequire*—"to follow," i.e. "to follow out." Two contemporary definitions are "to carry out...a purpose" and "apt, skillful" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Thus, the very notion of "Executive Mind" carries with it the notion of purposeful and effective action.

"Executive Mind" is not enamored of expression as such, only of expression that serves a purpose. It concerns itself with the alchemical blend of symbol, timbre, gesture, and tempo that inspires creative, effectual action. "Executive Mind" bespeaks an immense discipline relating the very sources of human aspiration to the ultimate ends of human action—an immense discipline which few persons imagine as a possibility, which still fewer persons actually undertake, which fewer yet master, and which virtually no institutions actively cultivate.

This essay begins with repeated efforts to characterize the concerns and the disciplines relevant to "Executive Mind." The point is not to "prove" that such a quality as "Executive Mind" exists, nor to "prove" that each historical character mentioned consciously exercised "Executive Mind." Rather, its aim is to argue that, rare as it is in historical and personal experience, such a quality is worth seeking for oneself and for the situations in life to which one wants to be responsible.

The initial strategy of this paper parallels Abraham Maslow's early efforts to seek out examples of "self-actualizing" persons. He wished to elaborate a category of motivation which, though statistically rare, could be argued to be an evolutionary aim for many or all. Toward the end of his life, Maslow recognized that human beings harbor an even deeper and more dignifying need than the need for self-actualization. He described it as the need to achieve meaningful participation in human projects which last beyond ourselves, projects that span the generations. Maslow was seeking to explain why some people aspire to act in ways that are both personally expressive and culturally reverberative. And this means, in turn, to act in ways responsive to inner impulses and external demands but not dictated by either, to act freely and artfully rather than compulsively and conformingly, to *sculpt* action so that it is timely, not timebound. I will argue that the cultivation and exercise of "Executive Mind" is the discipline which coordinates inner and outer worlds and leads to timely action, to action meaningful beyond oneself, through the generations.

After the initial efforts to characterize and illustrate "Executive Mind," the final section of this essay attempts to sketch the outlines of the kind of research that serves to cultivate "Executive Mind" and timely action.

FOUR COMPLEMENTARY DISCIPLINES: OBSERVING MIND, THEORIZING MIND, PASSIONATE MIND, EXECUTIVE MIND

The notion of "Executive Mind" points to more than one rare mental discipline. Influenced by the typologies of Jung (1971) and Mitroff and Kilmann (1978), we can speak of "Observing Mind," "Theorizing Mind," and "Passionate Mind" as complements to "Executive Mind." (See Figure 1). As a brief introduction to these disciplines, we can ask where they are cultivated in today's universities, and what historical figures can serve as archetypal representatives of each.

The notions of "Observing Mind" and "Theorizing Mind" are most familiar to the social scientist, although even at today's universities the appreciative stillness of "Observing Mind" is cultivated only by the clinically-oriented methodologies. It is a discipline epitomized by the nineteenth century natural scientists such as Darwin and Lyell. (Audubon's illustrations of birds represent a quintessence of the interplay of observation and execution.) Fully cultivated, "Observing Mind" includes not only the outside world, but also the subject's own thoughts, feelings, and actions (Torbert, 1973).

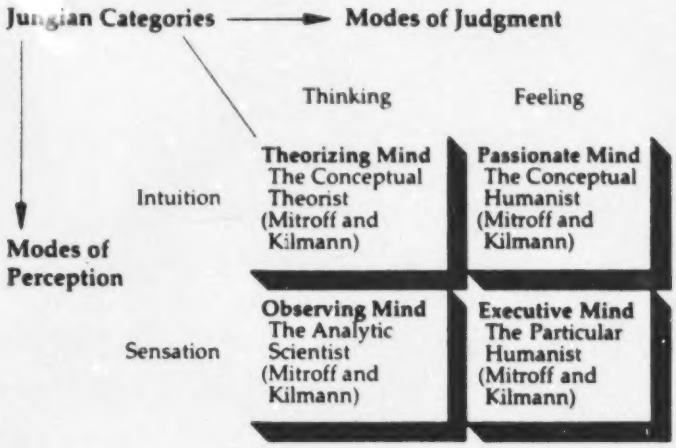

Figure I—**FOUR QUALITIES OF MIND**

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The Buddha as archetypal embodiment of "Observing Mind."

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If "Observing Mind" is rarely cultivated, the eternal constructive tension of "Theorizing Mind" is glimpsed almost solely through personal contact with truly philosophical teachers. Our ordinary literary forms virtually preclude the exhibition and cultivation of "Theorizing Mind." I can count only four twentieth century literary works that fully accept the discipline of instantiating "Theorizing Mind": Joyce's *Finnigan's Wake*, Heidegger's *What is Called Thinking?*, Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, and Gurdjieff's *All and Everything: Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*.

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Socrates as voice for "Theorizing Mind," Periclean Athens as chorus.

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As for the disciplines of "Passionate Mind" and "Executive Mind," these are relegated at the modern university almost entirely to peripheral activities such as drama and sports. Even the study of group dynamics is only rarely seen as the process of naming, containing, refining, and expressing the mysterious lifetime pulse of passion. Generally, the passions are reduced to mere emotions, proclaimed irrational, and excluded from the academic curriculum. Religion, in the ultimate inversion of traditional teachings, is treated as a private matter.

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Jesus, epiphany of "Passionate Mind."

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"Executive Mind" relies upon these other three disciplines for discriminating valid data about the outside and inside worlds where the executive works and for vivifying the purposiveness of the overall enterprise that the executive serves.

"Executive Mind" is the mental muscle that can operate as the fulcrum between a person's inner life and the outer world. It is the muscle that can transform habitual behavior into inspired, creative, timely action; the muscle managing the play of attention at the interface of time and space. Just as bodily musculature provides a person leverage in space, so "Executive Mind" provides leverage in time. Appropriate financial leveraging for a family, an enterprise, or a nation are examples of this capacity. Just as the ultimate development of bodily leverage gives the great athletes (such as Nadia Comaneci at the 1976 Olympics) the appearance of almost effortless ease and spaciousness in the midst of the most complex movements, so the highest development of mental leverage gives the great executive the appearance of leisureliness amidst the most complex schedule, the most dire emergency, the most momentous decisions.

The surest sign of the balanced development of "Executive Mind" in the young adult (circa ages 20-40) is the primary application of current executive capacities to cultivating "Observing Mind," "Theorizing Mind," and "Passionate Mind." "Executive Mind" is unlikely to manifest itself in a culturally transforming manner before the second half of life. Before that, the passion for recognition tempts one to seek excellence, power, glory, or truth in terms defined by others. Who achieves early in life the self-recognition from which temperate and just actions proceed?

Within the university, the pedagogical methods of case study, simulation, oral competitions, and clinical internships, pioneered primarily at schools of management and other professional schools, all seek to cultivate executive qualities.

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Gandhi as inquirer seeking integration of "Observing Mind," "Theoretical Mind," and "Passionate Mind" through "Executive Mind" (and Huxley's *The Grey Eminence*—a searing portrait of another spiritual-political figure whose initially parallel search deviated diabolically).

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BARNARD'S VIEW OF THE EXECUTIVE

Although the foregoing introductory comments may seem removed from the practice of executive leadership in today's world, a few brief references to Chester Barnard's classic work, *The Functions of the Executive* (1938) suggest otherwise.

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Observing Mind

Barnard describes the role of "Observing Mind" in executive leadership in the following quotes:

> The fine art of executive decision consists in not deciding questions that are not now pertinent, in not deciding prematurely, in not making decisions that cannot be made effective, and in not making decisions that others should make. (p. 135)

⁂

> There is no principle of executive conduct better established in good organizations than that orders will not be issued that cannot or will not be obeyed....To do so destroys authority, discipline, and morale. (p. 167)

⁂

> The decision as to whether an order has authority or not lies with the persons to whom it is addressed. (p. 163)

All three of these quotations emphasize how crucial it is for the executive to be attuned to those about him or her—to their ways of construing the world, the organization, and the executive—and to the temporal rhythms in human affairs. Out of such attentiveness comes the ability to foster a dynamic balance of initiatives between self and others.

The three quotations communicate an aura of modesty or humility about what the executive can and should do. More simply, the quotations describe an executive capable of observing without distortion what requires doing. One of the constant dangers which executives court by virtue of the explicit mandate to make decisions is that of ego-inflation. They come to believe that they should make all decisions, or as many as possible, and the more quickly the better. Such ego-inflation leads into a vicious cycle of fear and ineffectiveness. Addiction to decision-making work reduces the leisureliness characteristic of all four of the higher mental disciplines, gradually distancing the executive from a vivid commitment to an order appealing to others. Then, meeting with increasing resistance to decisions, the executive becomes less willing to entrust decisions to others, still further increasing the burden of decision-making.

Of all Alexander's generals and relatives, only Ptolemy observed the limits of his own range of command, preserving Egypt in peace, building Alexandria, and dying with the satisfaction of completed work and a continuing line. The others all struggled for the whole of Alexander's heritage, died young, and enjoyed none of it.

The capacity to listen to temporal rhythms—whether within a morning, a year, or a lifetime—and to await the moment when action can be effective, has been most dramatically illustrated in this century by Charles DeGaulle's retirement between 1946 and 1958. Over the decade that he was officially out of public service, his moral authority increased while that of the Fourth Republic dissipated, until, in 1958, he was called to end the Algerian War and to found the Fifth Republic. His stature was such that the French people turned to him to redress France in a nobler image—an image which he, by virtue as much of his observant retirement after World War II as of his military role during both wars, was the very embodiment. A more recent and more complex choreography of retirement and return to action is being enacted by Konosuke Matsushita of Matsushita Electric Company (Pascale and Athos, 1981). (The capacity for voluntary retirement is, of course, only one of many possible manifestations of "Observing Mind.")

Theorizing Mind

The role of "Theorizing Mind" in executive leadership is suggested by the following quotations from Barnard:

> A formal and orderly conception of the whole is rarely present, perhaps even rarely possible, except to a few men of executive genius ...Even the notion which is here in question seems rarely to be stressed either in practical or scientific studies. (p. 239)

⁂

> The distinguishing mark of the executive responsibility is that it requires not merely conformance to a complex code of morals but also the creation of moral codes for others....Organizations endure...in proportion to the breadth of the morality by which they are governed. This is only to say that foresight, long purposes, high ideals, are the basis for the persistence of cooperation. (pp. 281-282)

The executive, as Mintzberg's (1973) careful empirical studies have shown, is constantly besieged by a multitude of apparently competitive demands. A theoretical perspective reveals hidden complementarities among issues, establishes priorities, provides a meaningful frame for activities (i.e., a coherent, encouraging, dignifying frame), and endows the executive with the vigilance to anticipate the unexpected. In the absence of such a theoretical perspective, the executive's own activity becomes fragmented and that of the organization as a whole descends toward "loosely coupled" "organized anarchy" (Cohen and March, 1974; Weick, 1979).

In world affairs during the past generation, perhaps the most striking demonstration of the executive leverage provided by a synthetic theory which redefines the entire "stage" is Gamal Abdel

"Executive Mind" bespeaks an immense discipline relating the very sources of human aspiration to the ultimate ends of human action.

Nasser's creation of "The Third World." This concept, so persuasive to so many that we have virtually forgotten who originated it, facilitated the transformation of the frozen bipolarity of the post-war world into the dynamic interplay we know today. It encouraged and dignified all "Third World" countries, which had until then worn the sobriquet "underdeveloped" with appropriate dispiritedness. Egypt itself is a prime example. Alone among Arab countries, it has been able to struggle towards a new, more positive relationship to Israel in recent years, just as a person who forms a positive self-concept thereby becomes enabled to explore relationships with dissimilar persons.

Passionate Mind

To examine the role of "Passionate Mind" in executive leadership, we can begin with the following comments in Barnard's *The Functions of the Executive*:

> Purpose is essential to give any meaning to the rest of the environment. The environment must be looked at from some point of view to be intelligible. (p. 195)
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> The inculcation of belief in the real existence of a common purpose is an essential executive function. (p. 87)
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> ⁂
>
> Purpose is defined more nearly by the aggregate of action taken than by any formulation in words. (p. 231)

An executive's sense of purpose is obviously closely related to the implicit or explicit theory about the nature of individuals, organizations, societies, and the cosmos. But, equally obviously, a sense of purpose is no mere logical deduction from theoretical premises. A sense of purpose is a passionate, motivating quality which, as Barnard suggests above, is a precondition for intelligibility (a precondition for theorizing) and a more profound shaper of action than theory.

Isaiah Berlin (1980) attributes just such a capacity to Winston Churchill during the Battle of Britain. He does so in words that highlight the dialectical tension between the qualities of "Observing Mind" and those of "Passionate Mind":

> Churchill is not a sensitive lens which absorbs and concentrates and reflects and amplifies the sentiments of others; unlike the European dictators, he does not play on public opinion like an instrument. In 1940 he assumed an indomitable stoutness, an unsurrendering quality on the part of his people, and carried on....He idealised them with such intensity that in the end they approached his ideal and began to see themselves as he saw them: 'the buoyant and imperturbable temper of Britain which I had the honour to express'—it was indeed, but he had a lion's share in creating it. So hypnotic was the force of his words, so strong his faith, that by the sheer intensity of his eloquence he bound his spell upon them until it seemed to them that he was indeed speaking what was in their hearts and minds. Doubtless it was there; but largely dormant until he had awoken it within them.
>
> ⁂
>
> After he had spoken to them in the summer of 1940 as no one has ever before or since, they conceived a new idea of themselves which their own prowess and the admiration of the world has since established as a heroic image in the history of mankind, like Thermopylae or the defeat of the Spanish Armada. They went forward into battle transformed by his words. The spirit which they found within them he had created within himself from his inner resources, and poured it into his nation, and took their vivid reaction for an original impulse on their part, which he merely had the honor to clothe in suitable words. He created a heroic mood and turned the fortunes of the Battle of Britain not by catching the mood of his surroundings but by being stubbornly impervious to it, as he has been to so many of the passing shades and tones of which the life around him has been composed.
>
> ⁂
>
> The peculiar quality of heroic pride and a sense of the sublimity of the occasion arises in him...from a capacity for sustained introspective brooding, great depth and constancy of feeling—in particular, feeling for and fidelity to the great tradition for which he assumes a personal responsibility, a tradition which he bears upon his shoulders and must deliver, not only sound and undamaged but strengthened and embellished, to successors worthy of accepting the sacred burden. (pp. 14-15)

Churchill's impact on England in its darkest hour illustrates a fundamental tension between the academic mind and "Executive Mind." Where the "objective" academic mind might see only darkness and might regard any other construction of events as a form of dishonesty, "Executive Mind" is fired by a passion to accomplish an improbable purpose and is, consequently, fundamentally optimistic even at the

darkest moment of despair. This optimism is in no sense a fatalistic "just wait, everything will be okay" attitude, but rather the ability to draw energy from a supreme challenge or demand.

Executive Mind

The role of "Executive Mind" in executive leadership is to balance observation, strategy, and passion in responsible action. "Executive Mind" so coordinates action that it effectively transforms (past, empirical) physical and social realities into future purposes. In Barnard's words,

> [To develop] the non-logical, the intuitional, even the inspirational processes...means developing the artistic principle in the use of the mind, attaining proportion between speed and caution, between broad outlines and fineness of detail, between solidity and flexibility. As in other arts...constant practice is required. (p. 322)

To penetrate beyond the surface of these initial statements about "Executive Mind," it is necessary first to destroy the sense of antagonism between science and art with which many of us are bred. It is also necessary to eliminate the sense that science is objective and precise whereas art is subjective and imprecise. In particular, we are all familiar with essays and discussions about whether management has now become a science, clear and certain, or still remains an art, mysterious and uncertain. But anyone familiar with traditional arts—whether we think of the pyramids, of jiu jitsu, of sitar ragas, of the Commedia del'Arte, of Shakespearean sonnets, or of a Balanchine ballet—recognizes that mathematical precision and predictable (objective) effects on participants are of the essence in the arts. Conversely, anyone familiar with the frontiers of science today recognizes that the foundations of mathematics, of matter, of time, and of intelligence are all shrouded in mystery. The distinction between science and art is not between two kinds of knowing, but between knowing and doing. At their best, management sciences and management arts will complement one another; and management will certainly remain an art so long as there is anything to manage.

THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF EXECUTIVE MIND

Not every executive whose desk is clear, whose office is quiet, and who creates a personal relationship with a visitor before doing business has in fact mastered the disciplines of "Executive Mind." This style may merely represent an imitation (probably a parodying) of an impressive mentor. Nevertheless a clear desk symbolizes control over one's own time—over one's worlds of concern—whether as an accomplished fact, as a distant aspiration, or as a subterfuge. In fact, empirical studies show that executives frequently experience themselves as losing the battle for sufficient control over their time to address the issues they regard as most significant (Cohen and March, 1974, Perkins, 1967).

In an executive role, the experience of control over one's time, of clear mind amidst multiple demands, can only come from familiarity with three interpenetrating scales of "time-events"—one's own lifetime calling, the temporal rhythms of one's enterprise, and world historical currents. With this knowledge—or better, with the continuous thirst for this knowledge, since it is never complete, static, or fully explicit—comes the ability to meet each new demand calmly and actively, and to weave each new demand into the tapestry of one's life work. In this way, "Executive Mind" exercises a transforming influence within its sphere of activity. As suggested earlier by the mention of Churchill, DeGaulle, Gandhi, and Nasser, the exercise of "Executive Mind" can transform the very definition of a local situation, or of a nation, or of the international balance of power.

Thus, "Executive Mind" operates beyond the frontier of conventional judgement. Yet it never loses sight of the dumb power, the unconscious wisdom, and the sheer necessity of conventional judgement. Conventional praise and blame may define the context for future action, but they do not directly affect "Executive Mind." Indeed, certain Sufi masters choose "the path of blame," whereby they intentionally counter-balance the attractive power of their charisma by sculpting actions which attract blame as well. In this way, they seek to cultivate a passionately and precisely ambiguous arena within which aspirants can struggle to discover what is up to them. Similarly, certain psychotherapists and organizational consultants (e.g., Perls, Argyris) cultivate negative transference among their clients with the intention of minimizing any tendency in the clients to become passively dependent upon the interventionist as a heroic savior. To choose the "path of blame," or, more generally, to operate in a balanced fashion beyond the frontier of conventional judgement, requires egoic detachment from the outcomes of action, "works wrought uninvolved" in the words of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The Buddhist phrase for this state of mind is "no praise, no blame." And we are all familiar with Henry Ford's vulgar version: "never complain, never explain."

Excerpts from Oriana Fallaci's interview with Lech Walesa (Boston Globe, 3 15 81)

To operate in a balanced fashion beyond the frontier of conventional judgment requires egoic detachment from the outcomes of action.

can serve as a summary illustration of the complementarity among the four qualities of higher mind, and of the capacity these qualities bequeath to change the very definition of a situation:

I. Observing Mind

Q: Don't you ever feel scared...inadequate...by the responsibility you took in front of your country and of history?

A: Nie, nie, nie, because I am a man of faith and because I know that this moment needs a guy like me. A guy who can make decisions with good sense and solve problems in a cautious, moderate way. I am not a fool. I do understand that too many injustices got accumulated during these 36 years, so things cannot change from morning to night. It takes patience, it takes wisdom. I mean, the rage that people would like to burst like a bomb must be controlled. And I know how to control it, because I know how to reason, though I am not a learned....*I simply know that I smell things, I feel situations, and when the crowd is silent I understand what it silently says. And I say it with a voice, with the proper words.*

Q: Let's talk about the day you jumped beyond the fences [of the Lenin shipyards in Gdansk].

A: Well, long before it happened we had considered the possibility of some big strike in Gdansk. We had considered it in our meetings, when we taught the workers the history of Poland and the union laws. In fact, I had made myself ready to avoid an excessive situation and I had told the workers if there is an uproar, I want to be informed at once. And when I was informed, I immediately realized that the uproar had burst early because t' e situation was ripe, thus I had to get into the shipyards. The trouble was that four gentlemen, I mean four policemen, watched me day and night. I got them lost—I won't tell you how because I might need that trick again in the future—and I got to the shipyards and I jumped inside. I got there at a crucial moment. In fact, there was a meeting of 2,000 workers and the big boss was asking them to leave, making his promises. And nobody cared to oppose him. As a matter of fact, they were already leaving.

II. Theorizing Mind

Q: Has communism failed?

A: Ha! It depends on the way you measure the concept of good, bad, better, worse. Because if you choose the example of what we Polish have in our pockets and in our shops, then I answer that communism has done very little for us. If you choose the example of what is in our souls instead, then I answer that communism has done much for us. In fact our souls contain exactly the contrary of what they wanted. They wanted us not to believe in God and our churches are full. They wanted us to be materialistic, and incapable of sacrifice; we are antimaterialistic, capable of sacrifice. They wanted us to be afraid of the tanks, of the guns, and instead we don't fear them at all....

Q: Lech, where did you learn to talk like that, from whom?

A: I don't know. I told you that I never read a book, anything. I never had teachers either, nor examples to imitate. I always solved problems alone. Even the technical ones, like to fix a TV set or a sink, I think them over and I fix them in my way. Politics is the same. I think it over and I find the solution, or at least a solution. As for the moderate line I gave to Solidarity, however, I can tell you that I set it after the defeats of 1968 and 1970. It was then that I realized the necessity of working without impatience; otherwise, we would break our heads. I said to myself: Lech, a wall cannot be demolished with butts. We must move slowly, step by step, otherwise the wall remains untouched and we break our heads. You know, I have been arrested 100 times, more or less, usually 48-hour arrests, and one thinks very well in jail, because in jail there aren't noises and one is alone. It was in jail that I also found the way of sowing doubt into the minds of my jailers, to make them release me and to make them understand how wrong they were toward the country and themselves. Finally, it was in jail that I discovered the system of informing people about my arrests. Because it is useless to be arrested if people don't know.

Q: What was this system, Lech?

A: Well, when they released me and I went home, I placed myself in front of a bus stop and even if I had money to buy my ticket, I pretended to be penniless. So I asked the people to buy my ticket, explaining that I had been arrested and why. People got interested and bought my ticket. Then I took the bus and during the trip I continued to explain; I held sort of a rally for them to warm up feelings.

III. Passionate Mind

Q: This is great politics, Lech.

A: Nie, nie, nie. I am no politician. I have never been. Maybe one day I'll be one. I have just started to look around and understand their tricks, their calculations, but today I am no politician. The proof is that, if I were a politician, I would like doing what I do now. I would

never have enough of it. Instead, I'm fed up and I tell you at once what I am: I am a man full of anger, an anger I have kept in my stomach since I was a boy, a youngster. And when a man accumulates the anger I have accumulated for so many years, he learns to manage it all right. Which explains why I control so well the crowds and the strikes. Ha! One has to be very angry in order to know how to control the anger of the people. One has to have learned to live with it. Listen, my rage has been stored up for so long that I could keep it in at least five more years....

IV. Executive Mind

(Continuing from the moment at the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk, when the workers were leaving....)

I felt my blood boil. I elbowed my way through the crowd, I set myself in front of him and—do you know boxing? I landed him a straight left and I put him down so quickly that he almost fell out of the ring. I mean, I shouted at him that the workers wouldn't go anywhere if they weren't sure they had obtained what they wanted. So they felt strong, and I became their leader, and I still am.

Q: Lech, what does it mean to be a leader?

A: It means to have determination, it means to be resolute inside and outside, with ourselves and with others...

I know how to say things with the proper words, like I did with the peasants at the strike in Jelenia Gora, for instance, when I yelled at them: "You've started the wrong strike, you idiots, you champions of stupidity, I'm against you." And 300 people remained speechless. Well, speaking to the crowds isn't always the art of going with the crowds. Sometimes it's the art of going against the crowds....

Demands must be put at the right time, without impatience. Look at the monument we erected for our dead, our workers killed by the police in 1970. Had we built it at once or two years later, now it would be simply the branch of a tree, easy to cut. Instead, today it's a tree and its roots are so deep that nobody can extirpate them, and if it will be cut it will blossom again.

PART II

Illustrations of Executive Mind

The most felicitous recent artistic rendering of "Executive Mind" is Kurosawa's film *Kagemusha* (The Shadow Warrior). Depicting the jousting for supremacy among three warlords, just before the establishment of the shogunate in Japan, Kurosawa focuses on the warlord known as The Shadow Warrior. During his lifetime The Shadow Warrior gains his name from the practice of having one of his brothers impersonate him at times on the battlefield so that the enemy never knows whether he is actually present. After his death (which occurs early in the film) The Shadow Warrior's name gains an additional dimension of meaning, for his final will to his circle of brothers and generals is to keep his death a secret for three years and to continue to impersonate him for that time, using a common thief who looks like him and who has been trained to enact his role. The intention behind this is to keep their enemies off-balance. Here is an ultimate exercise of "Executive Mind": arranging to continue to act effectively even after death.

I mentioned above that "Executive Mind" cultivates such an intimacy with the rhythms of time—of social history, of institutional development and of the personal evolution of one's immediate circle—that it conveys a dynamic quality of stillness, or situatedness. This quality permeates the traditional Japanese disciplines of balanced movement and attentive sitting, visible throughout Kurosawa's film (and almost unendurably deliberate to the over-excited Western observer). This quality of situatedness is also vividly illustrated by the strategic disposition of the forces of The Shadow Warrior in battle. There are four "divisions" of troops, named Forest, Wind, Fire, and Mountain. Forest is the infantry which attacks first, Wind is one wing of cavalry, Fire is the other wing that enters at a decisive moment with short swords, and Mountain is the force that surrounds The Shadow Warrior himself. The Shadow Warrior (or his substitute) sits immobile atop a mountain behind the battle observing. Should the enemy break through to his position, the warriors of the Mountain division create a human shield around their leader who maintains his posture throughout. The legend is that the clan cannot be defeated so long as their leader remains still.

The executive, Barnard tells us, must balance solidity with flexibility. Kagemusha blends mountain and shadow, solid, enduring immobility with the simultaneous evanescent flexibility to be in two places at once, moving invisibly at will. As "mountain," Kagemusha empowers his own forces; as "shadow," he confuses the enemy.

"Executive Mind" conveys a dynamic quality of stillness, or situatedness.

THE DILEMMA OF ENTERING THE EXECUTIVE ROLE

A second central character in *The Shadow Warrior* is the common thief (read "sinner" in Christian terms) who is first pressed into the role of impersonating The Shadow Warrior at the latter's death. Even though the thief is an accomplished actor in the external sense, the executive role makes a spiritual demand on him—to maintain a continuous performance throughout his waking life—for which he is utterly unprepared and by which he is utterly humbled.

In the most deeply affecting scene of this powerful film, the thief is introduced by the Shadow Warrior's generals to his household retainers who are to be the only others to share in the secret of his true identity. With these men the thief may relax temporarily and be himself, to his immense relief. They can also offer him further advice about The Shadow Warrior's intimate habits of movement, expression, and speech. In the course of the joking that follows, it is clear the retainers do not believe that the friendly, anxious, unprepossessing thief could ever play The Shadow Warrior convincingly. On horseback and in battle regalia he may deceive the troops, but close up he simply lacks the tangible but undefinable situatedness of The Shadow Warrior. There is none of The Warrior's calm, immobile, ceaselessly vigilant presence. How will the thief possibly succeed in deceiving The Shadow Warrior's own grandson, let alone his concubines? It is inconceivable that the act will work for three days, let alone for three years.

In the midst of the slightly derisive jocularity, the thief asks lightly, "How's this?" Instantly, he becomes The Shadow Warrior, so undeniably bringing his rhythm and his aura of authority back to life that tears spring to the eyes of his retainers and of the audience. The act is no longer merely an act. the thief has demonstrated the authority of "Executive Mind," the authority to transform the very definition and atmosphere of a situation. He has,in fact, visibly become, by a supreme act of attunement, imagination, and will, and by his undeniable effect on others, what he earlier merely pretended to be. At the very moment when his opportunity to "play" the executive was vanishing in anxious hilarity, he "saw" in a new way what the challenge was and "rose to the occasion."

Each of us is called to exercise "Executive Mind" in our adult life, at the very least in regard to our own life as a whole and in regard to our children, if not also in the organizations, professions, and polities of which we are members. And each of us enters the executive role as unprepared as the common thief, no matter what our previous training. Ordinary analytic and calculative thought is incommensurable with—the merest shadow of—"Executive Mind." We can gain access to "Executive Mind" only through the continuous humility of accepting the inadequacy of our ordinary thoughts, emotions, and movements to our calling. Only such humility can motivate a listening for other voices beyond our ordinary thought, a listening which quiets our ordinary, lumbering, grandiose, anxious Walter Mitty daydreams. The experience of this listening gradually attunes us to the awesome complex of personal, social, and cosmic rhythms, and thereby grants us the authority to enact a role voluntarily and appropriately.

In order to help him achieve the proper state of receptivity and transmission—the proper state of in-formation—for his role in the highest rituals, the Song of Heaven is played for the Tibetan Dalai Lama. The Song of Heaven consists of a seemingly unbearable din, cymbals clashing and mountain horns bleating atonally and irregularly. Such is our dilemma in everyday life: to become in-formed amidst the inner and outer noise. Genuinely effective organizing—the gift of "Executive Mind"—generates order from chaos. Unlike even the most efficient conceivable machine, which generates greater order locally at the expense of a general increase in entropy universally, effective organizing is ("magically") universally uplifting. So far are we from effective organizing; so much does humility become us.

Like the common thief and the actor in a stage play, we will inevitably feel imprisoned within our role on occasion. We will not be listening to our lifetime calling, or the call will conflict with various momentary whims. We will want to retire temporarily from the publicity of the stage. We will want to cease being artful and just be ourselves. And it is of course necessary and desirable to meditate in solitude and to relax in the spontaneity of friendship. Indeed, as stated before, leisureliness is of the essence to all the higher states of mind:

all are achieved through a purely voluntary, playful process (Torbert, 1972). But, paradoxically, to be oneself, to be spontaneous, to be leisurely, to be friendly are the highest disciplines, the consummate arts. These possibilities are not natural in the ordinary sense; they belong primarily neither to our biological nature, "first nature," nor to social convention, "second nature," but rather to yet a "third nature." Our biological and social natures are simply the raw material-to-be-transformed for this third nature. Only a lifetime commitment to artful inquiry and performance gives us access to it.

Thus, "Executive Mind" treats the whole of life as an art-form—a form of theatre with stages and wings, with rehearsals and performances, with active collaborators, antagonists, "straight men," and audiences. It recognizes the need for the interplay of strategy and spontaneity, but also the need for a great deal of "undramatic," craft-life work, in setting one scene or another (Mangham and Overrington, 1982).

"Executive Mind" accepts the distances between inner self and one's performance at any given time, as well as the distance between one's performance and others' perceptions. Likewise, "Executive Mind" accepts and works with (though moves toward bridging rather than maintaining) the distances between the inner circle of colleagues who share one's vision and who take acting roles, and the wider audience which may very well not share one's vision or appreciate the distinction between acting and reacting. And, finally, "Executive Mind" accepts and works with the distances between contemporary political, economic, aesthetic, religious, and scientistic ideologies and the praxis of voluntarily creating non-elitist high cultures through the exercise of "Executive Mind."

In this sense, "Executive Mind" is profoundly anti-utopian. The vision of collapsing all distances and tensions into effortless, "classless" harmony strikes the active imagination as mere passive lunacy. Quite the contrary, it is the very distance and tension between the thief's nature and the executive role he assumes which, accepted at the critical moment when he is most tempted to relax in the bosom of his household—in the classless harmony of camaraderie—transform him and the whole "play" from the farce it could so easily have become to tragic stature.

THE DILEMMA OF EXECUTIVE SUCCESSION

A third character in *The Shadow Warrior* not yet mentioned here is Kagemusha's son. If the thief can teach us about the humility appropriate to entering an executive role (see Jentz, 1981 for a systematic treatment of the dilemmas of entering an executive role), the fate and actions of the son can give us insight into the humility appropriate for the executive who prepares to leave his executive role.

The dilemma of leaving an executive role is, of course, the dilemma of succession. The Shadow Warrior does not resolve the dilemma of succession by having the thief take his role. He only prolongs the dilemma. But to prolong the dilemma of succession may have been the principal aim underlying the entire, magnificent charade. For Kagemusha's son is a querulous sort who seems at once insecure, jealous of, and alienated from his father, not yet prepared to take the executive role. The three year interregnum may be the father's effort to allow the son further seasoning after the father is no longer present to overshadow him.

In any event, the interregnum does not achieve this purpose. The son undoes the father's lifetime work as soon as he gains the father's seat. Order descends into violence and chaos.

The highest art of "Executive Mind" is confounded by the dilemma of succession, the dilemma of parentage, the dilemma of the generations. Those who believe themselves consummate executives need only refer to their family lives for evidence to the contrary. This is simply to say that our own family is close enough to us to make it difficult for us to blind ourselves to the fact that it is beyond our control. Whether our family flourishes or disintegrates, we properly pray for guidance rather than crediting ourselves. The dilemma of succession faces executives with their limits, their mortality. The greatest leaders face their limits throughout their lifetime, continuously seeking worthy colleagues and successors to complement and to confront them. Lesser leaders turn away from their own limits by cultivating, rather than disowning, legends of omniscience, omnipotence, and infallibility.

CREATING EXECUTIVE TEAMS

These considerations lead us to the single greatest concern of "Executive Mind" between entry to, and exit from, the executive role—namely, the cultivation of a genuine executive team. In an executive

"Executive Mind" treats the whole of life as an art-form.

team, every member takes the executive role, takes responsibility for the welfare of the entire enterprise (Mills, 1965). One major reason for this concern is the one just described: namely, the desire to provide continuity for the enterprise beyond the lifetime of the individual chief executive. Other reasons include the need for different channels of access to top-level decisions, the need to confront assumptions about such decisions, and the need for multiple perspectives on the situations that surround such decisions. These different channels and perspectives can only be provided by human beings (a mechanical management information system cannot do the trick) because the relevant information is frequently not available in hard figures. It is subtle and implicit rather than categorical and explicit (recall Walesa's comment, "I smell things. I feel situations, and when the crowd is silent I understand what it silently says"). Moreover, the assumptions to be confronted in making, implementing, and evaluating top level decisions are often held in a fiercely subjective manner. People tend to yield more readily when confronted courageously or with artful indirection by trusted and respected colleagues than when presented with so-called "objective information" which they can interpret away.

An interesting example of executive succession and of the development of an executive team is found at Delta Airlines, the world's most profitable airline over the past thirty years. Part of the interest of the example is that the founding chief executive of Delta, C. E. Woolman, does not appear to be primarily responsible for the development of the executive team which succeeded him. Rather, as Woolman approached his seventies and after having suffered a heart attack, his cadre of top officers began, first imperceptibly and then more openly, to shift the management to themselves, learning how to manage by consensus. When Woolman died in 1966, the senior management team continued right on without the difficulties of succession experienced by other major airlines. Today, at Delta, the office of the chairman in effect includes not only the chief executive officer and the vice-chairman, but also the seven senior vice-presidents. This senior management team meets every Monday morning, and, although each member has a clearly defined area of responsibility (e.g., Marketing, Finance, Flight Operations), they operate interchangeably, important decisions handled quickly by whoever is in the office (*Business Week* 8/31/81).

As the Delta example suggests, "Executive Mind" (indeed, each of the higher mental capacities) derives not solely from individual genius and discipline but rather from a collaborative exercise in which the playful vigilance and the proper subordination of each uplifts the team as a whole (Vaill, 1978).

One important sign of executive greatness is the capacity to generate more than one great team during the executive's career. By this standard, one might nominate Red Auerbach, general manager of the Boston Celtics and organizer of three different championship basketball "dynasties" during his career, as the greatest contemporary American executive. Interestingly, the elusive but unmistakable common theme of these three teams is the running and passing and rebounding (the discipline and the self-subordination) of their greatest stars. Complementing this theme is the regular capacity of the team as a whole for playing "above their heads" in emergencies, rather than falling apart. The Celtics at play represent the best physical metaphor for "Executive Mind" of which I am aware (so long as we recall that their play occurs within a formal, well-defined game, with the result that the greatest strategy challenges to "Executive Mind"—the continuous reconceptualization and transformation of the very rules of the game—are not being exercised). It hardly seems coincidental that the coaching ranks of the NBA have been disproportionately populated by former Celtics during the past generation.

PART III

Research Cultivating Executive Mind, Timely Action

The importance of timely action is mentioned again and again throughout the foregoing pages. However, simply looking at the conceptual distinctions among the four qualities of higher mind does not tell us what we need to do or what we need to know to *cultivate* timely action. As a social scientist who has simultaneously taken executive roles, I have repeatedly faced the question, "What kind of research cultivates timely action?" To address this question I will be advocating a view of social science research that is significantly at variance with the kinds of knowledge derived from the two current research approaches, i.e., the hypothetico-deductive "quantitative" approach and the naturalistic, clinical, hermeneutic, or anthropological "qualitative" approach.

Research that leads toward timely action requires what I shall call an "existential study" that one makes in the midst of one's daily actions. The knowledge and action to which this kind of research leads revivifies the research process itself rather than coming after the conclusion of the research. This existential study aims to penetrate in the "metaphysical" direction beyond the self-enclosed, embalming qualities of reactive emotion and associational thought to the four active modes of higher mind. In the "physical" direction, it aims for live sensation of one's own acting and for "immaculate perception" of the surrounding world. Thus, this kind of research embraces self-study, study of phenomena external to oneself, and study of the interplay between self and world.

This existential study in turn fosters what I will call "developmental theorizing." This is the process of making hypotheses about a situation from a detached perspective, although one is integrally involved—as though one could watch the progress of a football game from a birds-eye view atop the stands, with the coach's commitment to ongoing strategizing and intervention, while simultaneously playing on the field. Such theorizing guides both action and study; it explores the interplay among the developmental rhythms of person, polis, tradition, and cosmos—it does not isolate each from the other as the academic disciplines so frequently do. It alerts the actor not only to what is general, but also to what is unique about the scene he or she is enacting with others. Such theorizing also reaches beyond itself to re-mind the actor of experiential "territories" beyond his or her current explicit knowledge.

Empirical testing to determine the operative influences at any given time complements existential study and developmental theorizing. An executive's empirical tests yield two types of data: (1) primary (real-time) qualitative data and (2) secondary, instrument-derived quantitative data. For example, today both government and corporate executives manage multiple, fluctuating, and frequently conflicting constituencies on a day-to-day basis, while simultaneously developing strategic plans based on econometric and policy models driven by instrumented data. Rather than treating only one type of data as legitimate, the executive practicing existential study and developmental theorizing will look for complementarities between the two, as well as complementarities between real-time and analytical modes of validation. Otherwise, analytical knowledge and real-time action become increasingly alienated from one another, just as campaign promises and strategic plans so frequently become increasingly divorced from day-to-day governmental and corporate decision-making.

To join existential study, developmental theorizing, and empirical testing in the midst of action is obviously a tall order. My claim is, simply, that any other approach will inhibit timely action. (See Argyris and Schon, 1974; Lindblom and Cohen, 1979; and Unger, 1975 for arguments compatible with this claim.)

The foregoing summary will no doubt have seemed vague and abstract to many readers. We can flesh out what this kind of research entails in two ways. First, very briefly, we can relate this kind of research to more familiar kinds of study, to the four qualities of mind elaborated earlier in this essay, and to common executive activities. Second, at somewhat greater length, we can explore what existential study and developmental theorizing initially reveal about the very nature of time and of timely action.

Whereas today's regnant paradigm of science divides the world in two, the "territory" to be studied empirically and the "map" which makes theoretical sense of the territory, the kind of real-time inquiry introduced here divides the world in four and treats each of the four divisions as a "territory" to be studied:

1. *The world outside.* This is studied in the natural and physical sciences, history, and empirical social science through

acute observation of the environment (i.e. by extroverted Observing Mind and empirical research instruments).

2. *One's own behavior in durational time.* This can be studied through audio and video tapes (i.e., by extroverted Observing Mind), and through others' feedback, through sports, and through the performing arts. All of the above rely on refinement of one's inner sensual awareness (i.e. by introverted Observing Mind).
3. *The "eternal" lawfulness of one's own thoughts and passions.* This is to be studied through therapy, friendly conversation, various card and board games, philosophy, certain projective tests, and meditation (i.e., by Theorizing Mind).
4. *One's life possibility and purpose.* This is to be studied through the sacred texts and ceremonies of the great religious traditions using prayer as a vehicle (i.e., by Passionate Mind).

On the institutional scale, the executive encounters four analogous arenas of action:

1. external opportunities, emergencies, and competitors
2. role-defined tasks
3. strategic planning with regard to major initiatives
4. governing policies and symbols of institutional identity, purpose, and self-correction (Torbert, 1981b)

These four arenas of action embrace different time periods:

1. emergencies arising at any moment
2. role-defined tasks recurring within a monthly, quarterly, or yearly cycle
3. major, strategic initiatives typically requiring on the order of three to five years
4. the institutional self-study process that an executive appreciating the importance of existential study would seek to encourage. This process would mature over a period of a generation as different members and groups within the institution find reasons to test self-study for themselves.

Of course, in practice, the effective scientist or executive, through the exercise of "Executive Mind," seeks to weave together the four different temporal strands, the four different institutional responsibilities, as well as the four different types of research, so that they become mutually supportive.

VARIATIONS ON THE EXPERIENCE OF TIME

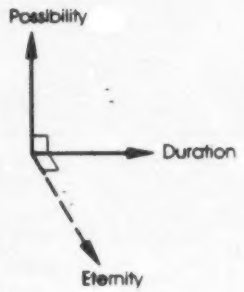
In an effort next to suggest briefly the outlines of what existential study shows about the relation of knowledge, time, and action, I will be speaking about understandings that have shaped themselves through years of existential study with guidance from many teachers, understandings that cognitive argument and externalized empirical data alone can neither confirm nor disconfirm, understandings with which the reader can best enter into dialogue through his or her own existential study.

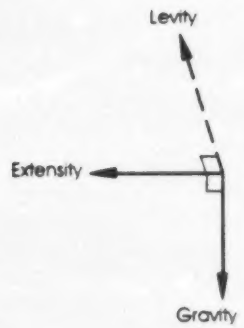
The kind of existential study I am speaking about early on reveals the different experiences of time. Not all experiences of time support effective action. Executives can study the different ways of experiencing time in order to transcend the limited time frame we operate in day to day. First, one's study shows repeatedly how rarely one is aware of time at all; in waking life as in dreams one is most frequently *time-oblivious*. This quality of awareness is utterly incompatible with intentional, timely action.

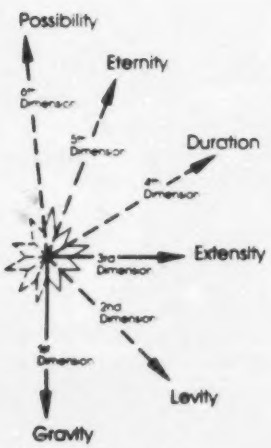
In most circumstances of modern life, one initially finds oneself confronted with the reality of time by clocks and (perhaps mutually conflicting) commitments to be somewhere at a certain time or finish something by a certain time. One experiences time as a constraint; one is *time-bound*. In this state of awareness, one is also not acting but being acted upon by forces, powers, and authorities of which one is only peripherally aware.

A specific kind of knowledge—a specific kind of questioning and answering—is associated with ordinary time-oblivious and time-bound states of awareness. This kind of questioning and answering seeks to determine situation-specific, time-bound facts. For example, if I am in a strange building, ask where the bathroom is, and then end up at a bathroom when I follow the directions given, I have learned a situation-specific, time-bound fact. The fact about the direction to the bathroom is valid only for this particular building and for the time the building exists. Obviously, this kind of knowledge is absolutely necessary to daily living. To feel that this kind of knowledge exists—that questions about "local" facts normally produce useful answers—generates an initial sense that the world is understandable, and that one can "negotiate" with it.

If one moves beyond time-oblivious experience and time-bound experience, and makes an effort to study oneself in action—with attention simultaneously to







passion, thought, sensation, and perception to the object-ing world—one occasionally experiences time as *duration*. One's awareness actually "accompanies" ongoing impulses, thoughts, actions, and effects. The experience of time as duration can have a variety of flavors. One can experience it as the dry, endless monotony of waiting, which reemphasizes one's time-boundedness. Or, at the other end of the spectrum, one can experience a liberating sense of participating in *continuity*, in the very essence, in the very dance of life itself.

This experience of time as durational verges, paradoxically, on another quality of time—the experience of *timelessness*. As one's attention becomes capable of tracing interlacing developmental patterns and gaps ("black holes" in time?) within one's ongoing experiencing of durational time, the exigencies of clock-time, which might earlier have distracted one from existential study, become appreciated as notes in a continuous (and thus eternal or timeless) symphony of passionate commitment, ironic detachment, and circumspect action. But one does not listen to this symphony with the ease, pleasure, and security with which one listens to a Beethoven symphony. This symphony is not yet completed. One properly listens for each succeeding note as a composer listens for the next note in the original process of composing, i.e., with an inquiring frame of mind. As one's existential study continues, one finds oneself returning again and again to the same questions. The questioning itself, perhaps even more than any particular pattern of answers, is appreciated as the key to conscious participation in this timeless symphony.

Through this eternal questioning, one is not listening for factual answers, nor for eternal formulae, but rather for "actual" answers. The answers come from impulses that call for translation through language, tone, and bearing into symbolic gestures—actions—which redefine and real-ize what is at stake in the human drama. This mode of "timeless" questioning in the search for "timely" impulses which can transform "time-bound" and "time-oblivious" settings is the balancing act the executive properly cultivates. Every executive wants to know when to act in a transforming manner, for every executive is charged with transforming dreams into actions, all the while suffering interruptions and disillusionments. No short course in "Time Management" will introduce him or her to the demanding real-time knowledge necessary to act in a timely fashion.

A SIX DIMENSIONAL MODEL OF SPACE/TIME

In seeking knowledge that would enhance my own timeliness in action, I found it useful to imagine space/time as a six-dimensional manifold, with three spatial dimensions and three temporal dimensions. Each of these dimensions can be distinguished in one's experience at any moment. The three spatial dimensions, though commonly thought of as height, breadth, and depth, are experienced as *gravity* (sensation of one's body situatedness), *levity* (what one's attention rises to visually, audibly, or intellectually), and *extensity* (breathing and movement). As already suggested, I have named the three temporal dimensions *duration*, *eternity*, and *possibility*. Duration is the experience of the moment-to-moment (one-dimensional) "line" of time. Eternity is the experience of thematic (two-dimensional) "cycles" or patterns of time, of the relationships among moments, of the sense in which this moment is archetypal, ever-repeated. Possibility is the experience of the (three-dimensional) "volume" of time, the "fullness" of time, or as the Greeks and the theologians call it, "kairos" (Gr: opportunity). (See Collin, 1974; Priestley, 1964; Torbert, 1981c for more extended treatments of this notion.)

The six-dimensional paradigm implies that whatever I may imagine myself to be doing, I will in fact only be behaving in subordination to various eternal laws (biological, psychological, sociological, astrophysical, etc.) *unless* I am in a position to see and play with those laws from the sixth dimension. Moreover, the notion of different *dimensions* emphasizes the incommensurability of the experience of each quality of space and time. I am reminded that to think about the six dimensions is not to experience them. At best, such theorizing reminds me of the *possibility* of existential study; at worst it substitutes itself for study.

This paradigm implies that existential study of the interplay of the six dimensions is my *only* genuine possibility—the only transforming action I can take—the only truly executive action I can take—until I begin actually to experience this interplay on a continuous basis. (There is a long and dangerous intermediate period when one sporadically experiences the interplay of dimensions, but quickly falls back into mere fantasies, or altogether forgets about this experience.) In short, this paradigm sets self-study-in-action as its highest norm and regards timely action as possible only if such self-study results in six-dimensional awareness. The purpose of social science

from this perspective is primarily the cultivation of this living six-dimensional awareness in persons. The development of a written body of knowledge which can communicate the opportunity for such awareness to others is a secondary aim, and the development of publicly verifiable evidence in support of propositions is a tertiary aim.

According to this six-dimensional model of space/time, timely action occurs when a human being interweaves the eternal laws of psyche, polity, and cosmos in such a way that a *possibility* is actualized in a moment of *durational* time. At such a moment, human destiny is so truly enacted that it makes an indelible mark on civilization and becomes legendary.

In the Christian calendar, Jesus's life belongs at the "center" of durational time because God miraculously intervened from beyond the realm of natural law (the virgin birth and the resurrection) to bring human kind the possibility of redemption. This redemption, it is claimed, each person today can actualize through an active acceptance of this very definition of the human situation.

In the Communist Chinese collectivist hagiography, the miraculous Long March is regarded as the actualization of an im*possibility*. The heroic efforts whereby Mao, Chou, and the Red Army escaped encirclement by Chiang Kaishek in the south and marched 6,000 miles north in virtually continuous battle over the course of an entire year to refound the Communist state represent the sacred, kairatic moment of attunement across all the territories of human action.

TIMELY ACTION AND THE STAGES OF THE DEVELOPING ORGANIZATION

The foregoing notions may provide a very broad orientation to issues of timing with which "Executive Mind" concerns itself, but they are certainly not specific enough or propositional enough to be considered a theory of timing. It was not until I tried retrospectively to understand what had occurred during a two-year period of starting and directing a school for teenagers from impoverished backgrounds that I became seriously interested in developing a theory of timing. Impressed by Erik Erikson's notion that historic individuals like Luther and Gandhi are so influential because their personal struggles parallel societal struggles and their personal transformation becomes a vehicle for a wider social transformation, I sensed that an adequate theory of timing would apply analogically to all scales of social process—to the development of a conversation, the development of an individual, the development of an organization, the development of an economy, etc. Executive action becomes timely and effective as it "speaks," not just to the developmental moment of any one social process, treated as though in isolation, but rather to the developmental moments of all the subtle layerings of social process present in any human interplay. But executives cannot analyze this complex layering eternally. They require a single lens through which they can refocus quickly again and again at different "focal lengths" (e.g., one focal length might be a social unit of a certain size, another might be a social unit of a vastly different size; one might be a time period of weeks, another of generations). This constant refocusing is the effort necessary to clarify what leadership their organizations currently demands, what effects their own actions have, and what archetypal roles they are playing in the human dramas in which they are participating.

Eventually I hit upon a nine-stage theory of organizational development that paralleled Erikson's theory of personal development and seemed to account best for the sequence of events in the life of the school I was studying. Included below are diagrams of Erikson's theory and of the organizational parallels I developed (Figure 2). Following these diagrams is a chart that outlines the characteristics of each of the organizational stages (Figure 3). It is not my aim in this article to present or defend the content of this stage theory. For that, I can refer the reader elsewhere (Torbert 1974, 1976, 1978a). The principle points I wish to make here concern the structural reasons for the relevance of this kind of theory to executives.

I have already suggested that one characteristic of a theory useful to executives is its applicability to all the scales of social life within which one's actions are embedded.

A theory useful to executives must also be both descriptive and normative. Because executives find themselves in the midst of action in unique situations and wish to act increasingly effectively in the future, they require a theory that both describes what they are currently experiencing and prescribes effective next steps.

A third feature of a theory useful to executives is that it alerts them to both what is general and what is unique in their situation. This would seem to be a highly paradoxical requirement for a theory, since theories are constructed in general terms meant to apply across particular situations, identifying what they have in common. In one sense the theory of timing offered here is no exception to this rule. The characteris-

tics of each stage are described in general terms meant to apply across situations. But if readers study the characteristics of the stages after the "Pre-defined productivity" or bureaucratic stage, they will find that they describe increasingly abstract meta-structures within which executives (and gradually their immediate teams and wider systems) can organize their actions to address what is unique in their situation.

Another reason why this theory of timing is particularly apropos for executives is that many of its features guard against preoccupation with the theory in a literal-minded way. The same features guard against blindness to realities not highlighted by the theory. The three-by-three matrix within which the stages nest can serve as a reminder that the behavioral, structural, and spiritual qualities of experience all co-exist continuously. Indeed, the three rows of the matrix are intended to re-present the three dimensions of time (sensual duration, eternal questions, and timely possibilities). The matrix also indicates that development is not merely a sequential unfolding, but requires "external shocks" to "jump" from one row to the next (Torbert, 1974; 1976). "Observing Mind" is alert to the implicit "layers" of the developmental process as well as to the current stage. It is also alert to potentially facilitating "external shocks." "Theorizing Mind" is not just absorbed in the internal logic of a theory, but rather cultivates the paradoxical, dialectical, and ironic modes of thinking characteristic of the highest stages of development. These modes treat no terms as literal, no categories as static, and no logic as context-free.

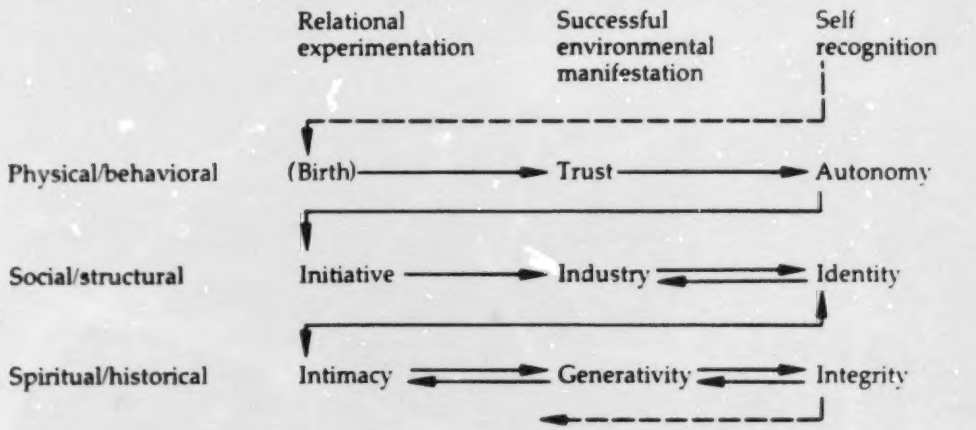
Lastly, this theory of timing addresses one particular supreme irony facing the

Figure 2

STAGE THEORY OF INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

from Torbert, CREATING A COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY, London, Wiley, 1976

Model of *Erikson's* Stages



The organizational analogies to *Erikson's* categories were named as follows:

Stages of Organization Development

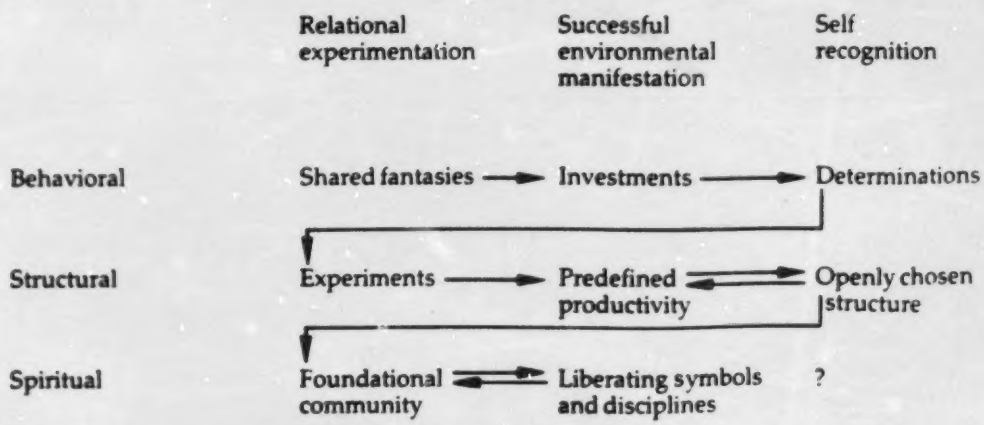


Figure 3

STAGES OF ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Characteristics of the Stages of Organization Development

I. Fantasies
- (a) Dreams, fantasies about future, initial visions;
- (b) informal conversations with friends, work associates;
- (c) diffuse collaboration—discussing of working with others on occasional, related projects to explore shared interests;
- (d) episodic exploration of varied parts of the social e[illegible]ment to see how they relate to fantasies, where opportunities exist, what poten[illegible]sequences of action would be.

II. Investments
- (a) Organizers make definite commitment to enterprise;
- (b) "parent" institutions make financial, structural, spiritual commitments to nurture;
- (c) early relationship-building among potential leaders, members, clients, advisors;
- (d) leadership style negotiated;
- (e) issues arise about the validity, reliability, and depth of the various personal and institutional commitments.

III. Determinations
- (a) Specific goals, clients, staff, members determined (hiring, admissions);
- (b) recognizable physical territory delineated;
- (c) first common tasks and time commitments;
- (d) psychological contracts between parties and organization defined implicitly or explicitly;
- (e) persistence/unity exhibited in face of perceived privation or threat.

IV. Experiments

Alternative legal, governing, administrative, physical, production, communication, planning, scheduling, celebratory, and/or interpersonal structures/processes practiced (modeled, role-played), tested in operation, and reformed.

V. Predefined productivity
- (a) Focus on doing the predefined task;
- (b) viability of product—single criterion of success;
- (c) standards and structures taken for granted (often formalized, institutionalized);
- (d) roles stabilized, job descriptions written;
- (e) effort to quantify results based on defined standards;
- (f) reality conceived of as dichotomous and competitive; succuess/failure, leader/follower, legitimate/illegitimate, work/play, reasonable/emotional.

VI. Openly chosen structure[1]
- (a) Shared continual reflection about larger (wider, deeper, more long-term, more abstract) purposes of the organization;
- (b) development of open interpersonal process, with disclosure, support, and confrontation on value/stylistic/emotional issues;
- (c) evaluation of effects of own behavior on others in organization and formative research on effects of organization on environment ("social accounting"); i.e., determining whether abstract purposes are being realized in practice;
- (d) direct facing and resolution of paradoxes: freedom versus control, expert versus participatory decision-making etc.;
- (e) creative, trans-conventional solutions to conflicts;
- (f) organizational his-story becomes my-story;
- (g) deliberately chosen structure with commitment to it, over time; the structure unique in the experience of the participants or among "similar" organizations;
- (h) primary emphasis on horizontal rather than vertical role differentiation;
- (i) development of symmetrical rather than subordinate relation with "parent" organization;
- (j) gaining of distinctive public repute based on the quality of collective action within the organization.

(Crisis of transition to spiritual ground)

VII. Foundational community
- (a) Regular, personal, shared research on relations among spiritual, theoretical, and behavioral qualities of experience;
- (b) transcendence of pre-existing cultural categories and appreciation of the continuous interplay of opposites, action/research, sex/politics, past/future, symbolic/diabolic, etc.;
- (c) organization survives a challenge or crisis during which its existing structure fails, shared purpose (spirit) revealed as sustaining;
- (d) new experiences of time: interplay of creative timeliness, timeless re-enactments of archetypal patterns, and time-bound personal needs and situational requirements; spirit as illuminating and meaning the past and future; history as myth (where myth means ultimate truth).

VIII. Liberating disciplines
- (a) Lowering of membership boundary between organization and environment; inclusive rather than exclusive, given commitment by aspirants to self-transformation;
- (b) tasks deliberately ironic to elucidate hidden relationships among task, process, and purpose, incomprehensible (unpleasant, undoable) without reference to their expression of and inspiration from organizational processes and purposes;
- (c) commitment by "leaders" to premeditated structural evolution over time;
- (d) "leaders" use all authority granted to exercise psychosocial jiu-jitsu, leading to increased sense of their authority among members;
- (e) openness (vulnerability) of "leaders" to challenge regarding their authenticity.

IX. (Uncharted in author's experience)

1. The reader should recall that few organizations achieve the final three stages. Therefore, some of the above characteristics may seem unfamiliar. ~~The characteristics of "Openly chosen structure" will be illustrated further in this paper~~.

executive. On the one hand, as noted earlier, "Executive Mind" is profoundly anti-utopian insofar as utopianism implies static harmony. On the other hand, as also noted, "Executive Mind" seeks to make dreams come true. Is there an inherently dynamic dream or vision to which "Executive Mind" can commit itself without falling into utopianism? This theory points to just such a vision. The developmental stages point persons, interactions, institutions, and nations toward increasingly dynamic modes of organization. The culmination is "communities of inquiry" where no presumption is sacred and where all conflict is civilizing. At the same time, the very notion that organizing occurs on multiple scales of size and duration dissolves the simplistic vision of a moment when world society as a whole becomes a macroscopic community of inquiry once and for all. Instead, there is a growing recognition that we live in a multiplicity of spatial-temporal relationships and that each of us plays a critical role in determining the scope, the significance, and the fruitfulness of each relationship. This recognition forces us to examine the question, "what is up to me *now* in the rhythmic developments in which I am participating with others?" A vision of momentary, microscopic communities of inquiry, arising here and there, then vanishing—yet gradually influencing wider historical currents—arises to replace simplistic political ideology, then vanishes.

EVIDENCE

Supposing for the moment that the foregoing kind of theory can genuinely edify executive action, how does "Executive Mind" gather, sift, and weigh evidence in testing the validity of a given theory and in testing how one's own actions can better harmonize with what one most deeply wishes? The executive's relationship to evidence is very different from that of most social scientists today. The executive is not ordinarily in a position to put hypotheses to rigorous empirical tests before making decisions and taking actions. On the other hand, as an "insider," both with respect to his own purposes and with respect to day-to-day institutional operations, the executive potentially has easier access to subtle, uncoded types of information than social scientists seeking data as outsiders.

Because I have brought a social scientist's perspective to the situations in which I have taken executive roles, I have subjected the stage theory outlined above to more rigorous testing than most conceptual schemes used by executives receive. But, from an

"Executive Mind" is profoundly anti-utopian.

empirical point of view, the theory is still in its infancy. Nevertheless, as an executive, I have developed much stronger confidence in the validity and heuristic value of the theory than the empirical evidence would seem to warrant. The following pages suggest how an executive may justifiably develop such confidence.

Since initially constructing the nine-stage theory, I have explored, sometimes informally, sometimes rigorously, whether the theory can help to analyze a wide variety of events. These range from a 60-second radio advertisement, to a two-hour meeting of a group of ten persons, to a five-year institutional change at a school of management, to the history of the United States (Torbert, 1978b, 1981b). Three other researchers have used the theory to interpret the development of seven "free schools," of a university, and of a religious order. Even more important to my confidence in the theory have been the two instances of executive success (on a minor scale) that occurred when I used the theory to discipline my thinking in the midst of ongoing organizational events. In both cases, the theory led me to experiment with modes of behavior quite alien to my ordinary managerial style, yet uniquely effective. I judge them as "uniquely effective" because in both situations all members of each institution (13 in one case, 65 in another case) unanimously agreed to and implemented fundamental institutional changes *with little or no residual conflict after the change*. These changes were not inherently easy ones. They threatened particular interests and provoked anxieties. Once enacted, they transformed institutional duties and experiences. In one case half of the members had their duties changed, in the other everyone's duties were changed. In neither case did other institutional members share the paradigm and theory of timing I was relying on. Hence, the changes were seen as successful from a variety of points of view.

In empirical terms, of course, two cases do not nearly a proof make. And it is certainly one of the functions of an empirical orientation to cultivate modesty about the certainty one attributes to one's purported "knowledge." Nevertheless, executives are frequently in the position of "betting their careers" on judgements based on conceptual schema tested no more rigorously than above. To counsel executives to test their conceptual schemes more adequately *before* continuing to act is to offer absurd advice. To counsel executives to treat themselves as engaged in a continuing inquiry as they act, rather than acting dogmatically, makes more sense, but in no way makes room for the conviction a Churchill must convey during the Battle of Britain. There are moments when, however inquiring one's inner attitude, explicit tentativeness prohibits survival. Does this mean that great executives, and great scientists as well (Mitroff, 1974), must blind themselves to evidence on occasion, or that they must act in a willfully counterfactual way?

I do not believe so. Instead, my own experience suggests to me that an executive may appropriately "add up" his data differently from the conventions of parametric statistics. For example, the two cases cited above substantiate *for me* the value of continuing to test this theory in action. Were I to take an external, analytic point of view, I might not draw the same conclusion. But, because I was a participant in each of these two cases, the theory guided what I said and did on *different scales* at *different moments*. It generated increasing institutional responsiveness and coherence on almost all occasions from the point of view of participants with *different perspectives* and *different stakes* in the outcomes. Thus, from a real-time point of view the theory was subjected to multiple tests, not just two. Moreover, the degree to which the consequences of these tests mutually reinforced one another further substantiates my sense of the elegance and power of this theory. (Of course, an alternative hypothesis is that my actions were irrelevant to the fundamental institutional changes, but that the theory kept me preoccupied in a relatively harmless fashion. A theory that makes executives feel powerful while actually rendering them harmless may seem even more elegant to some.)

But the central point here is implicit in the underlined "for me" above. The two cases do not provide strong *general* substantiation for adopting this theory—for you, or you, or you to begin testing this theory. The two cases provide strong substantiation of the theory *for me* to the degree that I was alert to their moment-to-moment development through the exercise of "Observing Mind," and was helped to be even more alert by the theory itself.

Put another way, the executive can engage in two distinct types of empirical inquiry—first-hand, interactional inquiry and second-hand, instrumented inquiry. Both types of empirical inquiry are impor-

tant to the executive, and the results of each can correct the other. First-hand, interactional inquiry is not generalizable beyond the time and place of the inquiry, except to the rest of the life of the inquirer. Second-hand, instrumented inquiry is potentially generalizable. On the other hand, first-hand interactional inquiry provides continual testing of the quality of mind and the theory of timing guiding the inquiry. Second-hand, instrumented inquiry provides no such test. Thus, the notion of first-hand, interactional inquiry opens into a whole arena of evidence and of validity testing not considered in the conventional methodological literature. The concern to develop a kind of research that cultivates timely action leads beyond social science as formal inquiry, to social science as living inquiry.

CONCLUSION

In the six-dimensional paradigm of space-time, action theory is appropriately generalizable only one person at a time from the inside out through the exercise of the four qualities of higher mind (although there is a minor role for "external shocks" such as this paper). In the early phases of testing a theory in executive action, the theory "proves itself" as much by the degree to which it cultivates an alertness which reaches beyond its own categories as by the degree that its categories directly inform effective strategy and action.

"Executive Mind" is incompatible with ideological rigidity. Together, the four qualities of higher mind resist addiction to any substance and any theory.

How can an executive possibly maintain lifetime credibility if he or she is addicted to anything and is consequently unable to be trustworthily responsive and educationally unpredictable?

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